

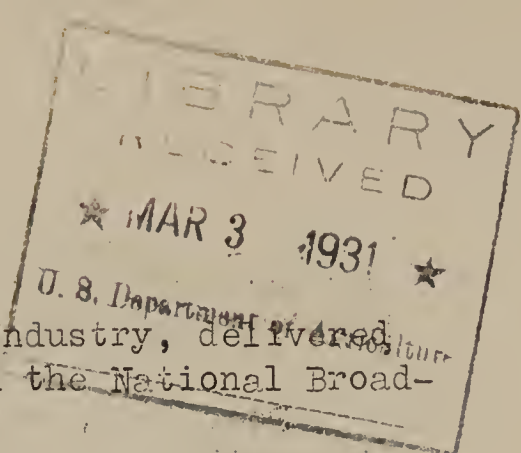
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THE GARDEN CALENDAR

A radio talk by Mr. W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered through Station WRC and 39 other stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, February 17, 1931.



How-do-you-do Friends. - Last Tuesday I spoke about increasing and safeguarding the home food supply by means of a good vegetable garden, and incidentally asked what you had for dinner on that particular day. A day or two later I received a letter from a lady in Springfield, Massachusetts, that I want to read to you. Here it is: Mr. Beattie, Dear Sir: You asked what we had for dinner today. Well I must tell you what I had and the vegetables were out of my own garden and raised by myself. I have a lot 50 by 95. I dug it up a little at a time myself. I raised corn, stringless beans, shell beans, peas, summer squash, swiss chard, carrots, turnips, beets, tomatoes and cabbage. For dinner today I cooked finely cut cabbage, diced carrots, diced turnips, each boiled separately, a can of peas, a can of stringless beans, boiled potatoes also boiled maccaroni and all was placed on a large platter around a nice piece of top round steak cooked rare done and a nice brown sauce put over all -- and believe me it was good. I had it all ready to eat when you were speaking this noon. I do all my own work for four, three men, and they do not like gardening.

Good, Don't I wish I could have been around to have sampled that dinner. Well, all I have to say is if everybody living on farms and town folks who have the land would follow the example of this lady and grow plenty of vegetables for summer use and some to can and store for winter, we would all be better off.

Thousands of the families of the unemployed in cities are being fed by their more fortunate neighbors and by charitable organizations. We are told that there is plenty of food in the country, in fact there are great surpluses of certain commodities, but thousands of consumers, who are in many cases out of work, do not have the money to purchase all that they need therefore are living on the bare necessities. It is a fact that we have hunger and suffering right in the midst of plenty. The lady whose letter I read to you has solved the problem in a practical way, and thousands of other families have found the road to plenty through a good home garden, a small flock of poultry, and perhaps a cow and a pig or two, where land is available. It is our aim to give you practical suggestions for the future and to help everyone to provide against a recurrence of the present situation.

The commercial fruit and vegetable growers are wondering where they stand and how best to proceed. This is a day of cutting production costs in every line. In gardening it is often possible to cut unit costs by increasing the production per acre. It may cost very little more to produce 600 dozen ears of sweet corn on an acre than to produce 300 or 350 dozen and that extra yield is largely on the side of profit. The average yield of potatoes for 1930 is given at 106.4 bushels per acre and the five year average at 115.5 bushels per

acre, In spite of this low average for the country there were plenty of potato growers whose average was above 250 bushels and quite a number who were in the 400 bushel per acre class.

Poor land, poorly farmed, is the main factor in holding down yields of all fruits and vegetables. Many of us plant potatoes, peas, beans, tomatoes, corn and other crops in our gardens without properly preparing or fertilizing the soil and then accept whatever we may get in return as the inevitable. We may get enough peas for one meal for the family or enough potatoes to last half way through the year but we accept the result almost without question. Our low yield of potatoes for example may be due to any one or more than one of a number of causes, the control of which are almost entirely within our power. Why is it then that so many of us are content to remain in the lower class rather than to climb to the 400 bushel class. If our beans be full of strings and our tomatoes mostly culls, we usually blame the weather and let it go at that.

Last Tuesday I mentioned six important points in the cultivation of a successful food garden, namely, the soil and location of the garden, thorough preparation before planting, starting early, cultivating from the very start, make frequent or succession plantings of certain crops, and protect your garden from insects and diseases. I should have added, use nothing but the best seeds and plants in the garden. Today I want to mention the seven main groups of garden vegetables and very briefly tell why they are important in the diet.

First, potatoes and sweet potatoes. Important in the diet for their starch and sugar and other qualities including bulk.

Second, peas and beans including green beans and dry beans also green and dried peas. The green beans are important as a source of early green food and a certain amount of vitamin. The peas and the dry beans for their protein sugars, starch, and other food elements.

Third, salads and greens -- including lettuce, spinach, turnips, mustard, kale, cabbage, broccoli, etc., are important as carriers of vitamins and mineral salts in just the right proportions required in our diet. These are the vegetables that tone up our whole system.

Fourth, the root crops including radishes, beets, carrots, turnips, parsnips, salsify, etc., important in making up the bulk of our food and also for their vitamin content.

Fifth, tomatoes for their vitamin content and pleasing flavor, especially when served raw. Important for canning.

Sixth, sweet corn for its food value, sugar, starch, etc., and especially because it is so good. Important for canning.

Seventh, the vine crops including squashes, summer and winter, muskmelons, watermelons, cucumbers and edible gourds are all valuable additions to our garden crops, partly because of their food value and vitamin content and partly because they are so refreshing and good to eat.

Every gardener has his or her favorite varieties of these vegetables and now is the time to order the seeds and plan to get the garden started, unless perchance you live in the balmy southland and already have your garden well under way. Remember the seven points in the cultivation of a good garden and also the seven most important groups of garden vegetables and plant them.

Next Tuesday on the farm and home hour we bring you the regular meeting of the Progressive Garden Club. Until then good-bye.

